ETS AND CANCER OTHER THAN THE LUNG

CLAIM: NON-SMOKERS EXPOSED TO ETS ARE AT INCREASED RISK OF DEVELOPING CANCER AT SEVERAL SITES.

RESPONSES:

- Very few studies have been published on ETS and cancer other than the lung. A presenter at a recent scientific symposium in Montreal, Canada, described them as follows: "These . . . studies provide insufficient data to evaluate the effect of ETS on cancer other than of the lung. The reported associations are weak and inconsistent, and are subject to the potential effects of biases and uncontrolled confounding factors . . . ".(1)

- A 1989 study by Slattery, et al., reported an increased risk of cervical cancer in non-smokers who reported three or more hours of ETS exposure per day.(2) Although the researchers attempted to adjust for age, church attendance, education and number of sexual partners, these variables do not account for all factors that may contribute to disease. This paper was strongly criticized by other scientists.(3)

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- Two Japanese studies have reported statistically significant associations in women between brain or nasal sinus cancers and spousal smoking.(3)

- Statistically significant elevated risks for cancers of the endocrine system and for cervical cancer were reported in a 1985 study by Sandler, et al., of patients in North Carolina.(4) This study also reported a statistically non-significant increased risk for breast cancer in non-smoking women. However, this study has been criticized because it did not control for reported risk factors such as sexual activity, which is reported to be strongly correlated with incidence of cervical cancer.

- Two case-control studies have addressed bladder cancer incidence; neither reported an association between bladder cancer and exposure to ETS at home or at work.(5)

- These reports are isolated and few in number; therefore, there are insufficient scientific data to reach any conclusion about ETS exposure and non-pulmonary cancer incidence.

- Two studies reported increased risks for certain childhood cancers associated with parental smoking.(6) However,

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some important confounders were not considered in these studies.

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